**Crisis & Continuing Support for Survivors of Sexual Assault**

**DO**
- **Remain calm.** It’s common for you to feel shocked or outraged, but expressing these emotions to the victim might cause them more trauma.
- **Believe the victim!** Make it clear that you believe that the assault happened and that it is not his or her fault.
- **Give the victim control.** All control was removed from them at the time of the assault. Empower them to make their own decisions about what steps to take next. You’re there to offer information, not advice.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** It is the victim’s decision who they want to know about their assault, not yours.
- **Encourage them to contact ACCESS at 515.292.5378**, but allow them to decide whether or not they want to.

**DON’T**
- Ask “why” questions that make the victim defensive.
- Get angry if the victim refuses to talk about their assault.
- Pry into physically intimate aspects of the assault.
- Confront the offender or encourage revenge. This will just create additional trauma for the victim.
- Hold or touch the victim without asking permission.
- Say everything is alright.
- Make promises you’re not sure you can keep, such as promising that no one will ever hurt the victim again or that the offender will go to jail.
- Constantly ask how they are doing.

**Common Long-Term Effects**
- denial
- anxiety
- social withdrawal
- flashbacks
- helplessness
- difficulty with intimacy
- fear
- guilt
- dissociation
- anger
- shame
- dislike of sex
- numbness
- difficulty concentrating
- self-blame
- depression
- mood swings
- rationalization
- nightmares
- loneliness
- crisis of faith
- difficulty trusting themselves or others

For 24-hour assistance and support, or to report a sexual assault, call: 515.29.5378